

The
NEW HAMPSHIRE
DCYF
INDEPENDENT
LIVING PROGRAM
An Adult Living Preparation Process
REPORT
FFY 1999-2000
FFY 2000-2001



I. Responsible State Agency

The Department of Health and Human Services, Division for Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) has been designated by the State of New Hampshire to manage the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program originally called the New Hampshire Teen Independent Living Program.

The philosophy of the Independent Living (IL) Program is that youth in foster care will have an opportunity to develop skills to make a successful transition into adulthood and become a contributing member of society. The adult living preparation planning process is offered to youth in out-of-placements who are under the age of 21 and who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age. The program's services are also offered to former foster care youth, ages 18-21, who left DCYF and are over the age of 18. The IL Program is designed to help youth build on their natural abilities, succeed in school, become employable, and make positive connections in their communities.

II. Program Description

The New Hampshire Teen Independent Living (IL) program is comprised of four IL workers and an IL Program Specialist who together provide adult living preparation planning and counseling statewide. The four IL workers are responsible for 3 district office encompassing the IL services statewide for youth in the custody of DCYF and in an out of home place who are under the age of 21. The IL Program Specialist is located at the DCYF State Office and supervises the four IL workers and monitors the implementation of the IL program and develops programs and services to according to the federal mandates.

The IL program focuses on the youth's natural talents and works with them on building confidence, self-respect, and accountability for their behaviors. The ALP planning process uses input from youth in the planning process and provides personal and emotional support for them within a safe environment. The program's IL skills training uses positive youth development and experiential learning techniques to help youth in increase their daily living

skill levels, educational achievement status, and career aspirations and goals. The Adult Living Preparation (ALP) process includes educational and career counseling, and future planning using a Needs Assessment, an Independent Living Life Skills Assessment, and a Career Assessment. The IL staff, DCYF staff, JPPO worker, foster parents, group home staff, and biological parents or relatives, when possible, work together with the youth to develop an ALP Plan.

The ALP process mainly revolves around residential staff and foster parents providing ongoing life skills trainings and activities with youth. The IL staff monitors the youth's progress by maintaining regular contact with providers and the youth, by reviewing the IL Skills Assessment that is repeated every six months. Changes in the assessment are noted by the IL staff and reviewed with the group home staff or foster parent regarding the youth's need for additional trainings in order to move forward with their academic goals, and career plans. These changes are discussed with the youth and noted in the "Needs/Action section" of their ALP plan.

The Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 was enacted into law in December 1999 it provides additional funds to help former foster care youth with aftercare housing and services. These additional funds provides a continuum of care for youth leaving DCYF and focuses on:

- Helping youth move toward reaching their full potential in adulthood;
- Providing youth with additional educational supports and training to become gainfully employed and become self-supporting;
- Helping youth prepare for and enter a postsecondary training or another educational institution that relates to their career of choice;
- Providing personal and emotional support for youth by connecting them to mentors or adult advocates in the community; and
- Providing support in finding affordable housing, mental health services, employment counseling, and medical and dental insurance coverage.

The additional support for former foster care youth is essential part of helping youth succeed in adulthood. This change will help youth lacking strong family ties so they will have the financial to live in the community as an adult. The goal of the change is to ensure that every

youth has the necessary supports to become self supporting and able to meet their full potential. New Hampshire will enhance the mentor/advocate part of the program to offer that support around educational and career planning issues, and how to access resources in the community, such as employment options or technical training programs. The mentor or advocates take away some pressure on youth meet the challenges during of making the transition or adjustment to adulthood. Some of the activities youth often need help with are:

- Obtaining a high school diploma or GED;
- Applying to college or technical program, to engage in career planning, job training and placement including completing the financial aid forms; and
- Connecting to adult services such as supported housing, community health, and dental services and mental health supports.

In addition, the program plans to expand the training requirements for DCYF staff, foster parents and group home providers on how to work together with youth around personal responsibility and accountability in regards to high-risk behaviors. These specialized trainings are designed to demonstrate to participants how to present skills training to youth in a positive, youth centered way using techniques that engage the youth. There are specific trainings offered through CLL to clarify what is “normal” adolescent behavior, and what are reactive behaviors stemming from the family chaos or abuse and how care givers can address these problem behaviors with youth in a constructive manner. Youth are also taught how risky behaviors and poor choices can have an effect on their future plans, getting a job, getting accepted to college or even getting a driver’s license.

A. IL Program Activities and Services

1. Trainings

a. Life Skills Training for Youth and Providers

The IL program used the “Preparing Adolescents for Young Adulthood” (PAYA), training to train foster care youth on daily life skills. The group home staff and foster parents were trained on the PAYA curriculum and then provided weekly training for youth in their residences. They also used the “Making It On Your Own” workbook developed by Dorothy Ansell of the National Resource Center to channel the youth’s strengths and personal vision in developing the life skills.

In September 2000, the IL staff, group home staff and foster parents met with staff from the College for Life Long Learning regarding developing a new life skills training curriculum. The curriculum has taken 2 years to develop and was reviewed regularly by the Teen Advisory Board members. The training has been named by the Teen Advisory Board as the “**NH Trails**” (Teen Responsibilities and Independent Living Skills) and will officially begin to be used in October 2002. Foster parents and residential staff statewide will be selected to attend the “Train the Trainers” **NH Trails** training so they will be able to train co-workers and new staff or foster parents on how to effectively present the material to youth. This training requires that residential providers and foster parents use the following training methods:

➤ “**Positive Youth Development**”

This approach encourages the involvement of youth at all levels in the adult living preparation planning process and promotes mutual respect and responsibility. The core elements of **Total Youth Involvement** are to help providers develop a healthy and safe environment to allow youth to grow in and become confident individuals. It provides youth an opportunity to learn how to:

- Value the person they are inside;
- Create a healthy and safe environment;
- Develop healthy relationships; and
- Learn by practicing.

➤ **Behavior Management Techniques of an Adolescent**

This training teaches DCYF staff, IL workers, residential staff, and foster parents how to focus on understanding resiliency and the struggle youth have to overcome life situations that brought them into care. They learn how to develop positive, trusting relationships with adults and become involved in connecting with external systems that did not help them. For example: Their school records did not follow them to the next school so the youth could not start school putting them behind in their schoolwork. Youth in the IL program often say they feel helpless that often

results in problem behaviors. When the youth react to being treated unfairly they often get into trouble and end up being diagnosed with a behavior problem. The IL staff, CPSW/JPPPO, group home staff, and foster parents are being taught how to use behavior management techniques to help youth overcome adversity and deal with past traumas or threatening experiences that brought them into placement with DCYF. IL program staff found that behavior management techniques help youth to build resiliency, confidence, and a belief in their ability to affect their own life.

Youth involved with the IL program skills training will develop a positive sense of self and learn how to safely connect with birth families or role models in their community. During the activities participants are given ongoing support and learn how to build positive relationships and accept limitations of people in their lives.

➤ **“Adventure-Based Learning “**

Adventure-Based Learning (ABL) sessions are offered regularly for youth and their caregiver because ABL concepts promote an atmosphere that is fun, supportive, and challenging. The goal of non-competitive games, group problem-solving initiatives, and ropes course events enhance cooperation and teamwork, and help participants:

- Improve their self-confidence;
- Have healthy behaviors and lifestyles;
- Develop strategies that enhance decision-making; and
- Learn to respect and accept individuals for their differences.

The University of New Hampshire’s Browne Center is a certified provider for adventure-based activities. There is a large training center in southern NH that includes a low and high ropes course, and a large building for indoor games with several areas outside for other initiatives. The IL program staff encourages group home providers, and foster parents to take youth in their residence to use the Browne Center programs regularly. The annual IL Teen Conference held in September 2001 offered many adventure-based learning

opportunities. Youth attending the conference were able to use the challenge course including high and low elements, games and initiatives.

b. New Worker Training on the Adult Living Preparation Process

The new worker training includes the distribution of the IL program's policy that explains that all youth in DCYF custody, age 16 or older who are in out-of-placement are entitled to the support and services of the program. It is further explained that youth on their case load must have a Needs Assessments, a IL Skills Assessment, and an Adult Living Preparation (ALP) Plan within 30-60 days of their 16th birthday.

It was further explained that group home staff and some foster parents are expected to complete the IL program's adult living preparation paper work that includes a Needs Assessment, an IL Skills Assessment, and an ALP Plan and provides ongoing life skills trainings to youth in their care. New workers were instructed to review the paperwork sent to them by the provider or foster parent and to let the IL staff know their suggestions or recommendations.

The workers learned that group home providers and some foster parents are paid by the IL program for completing the PAYA training with youth in their care. The UNH College for Lifelong Learning (CLL) periodically provides "Trainings For Trainer" sessions to teach new group home providers and foster parents how to conduct the PAYA curriculum with youth. Youth who successfully complete the training receive a \$100.00 stipend if they can verify that they have mastered the daily living skills in the PAYA workbooks. If the youth does not complete the workbook, and ages out, they are paid according to the number of chapters they have completed and mastered.

It was explained to the workers that group providers and foster parents are often involved in developing an Aftercare Plan with youth who have reached age 17 or older. The plan is designed to reflect where the youth is going to live as an adult

and where they can find safe, affordable housing, community supports, and job opportunities. The family's situation is reviewed with the CPSW/JPPPO as it is an important part of the plan, as it relates to permanency and concurrent planning issues and if the youth could be homeless after leaving the custody.

As the youth nears the end of their involvement with DCYF, the Aftercare Plan is reviewed regularly with the youth's network team that includes parents, ILP staff, CPSW, JPPPO and GH providers or foster parents. The CPSW or JPPPO, IL worker, and the caregivers review the Aftercare plan with the youth at the 6-3 month period. They make a list what still needs to be done with the youth before leaving foster care and who else might be needed to help with the process. Just as the youth leaves custody, the DCYF staff completes the ILP Transition Fact Sheet. This form outlines: the youth's reason for leaving custody; what the adult living arrangement are; what services is being offered; where the youth presently works, current income; educational programs completed or attended; and official documents and resources.

The training explains how the passing of the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 and the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program has affected the NH Teen Independent program's delivery of services. The federal mandates have expanded the youth's age eligibility to age 21 and allowed IL programs to pay for aftercare house. The new workers were asked for their input on the aftercare housing issue and what aftercare IL services they believed were needed. Input from new workers has been valuable because many of them are young and on an average only 5 years away from having been on their own. They were able to verbalize the positive and negative things that happen during the early phase making the transition to adulthood.

The workers are asked to present the ALP plan, Aftercare Plan and the three assessments at administrative Title IV-E reviews, IEP meetings, court review hearings and at the dispositional hearings so judges would be aware of the independent living program and the services available for youth. They were asked

to meet with the IL staff regularly to work on aftercare plans and the family situation. It was explained that each youth needs an informational packet that includes medical and school records, workers' phone numbers, health insurance information, an official birth certificate and social security card.

c. Career Planning and Job Preparation Training

The IL staff train residential providers and foster parents on how to use the computer program called Career Aptitude Survey from "Careerware-Choices" with youth. The survey identifies the youth's natural skills and specific interest and how these relate to the youth's educational and career planning.

The NH Works Program of the Employment Security office provides ongoing trainings for the public and assists them in finding a job in the community. The trainings include resume writing, job readiness, employment skills development, job retention, social disciplines, and workplace ethics and behaviors. Youth in the IL program are encouraged to use this resource because they are taught how risky behaviors can affect career objectives or plans, and how a chemical free life style can enhance promotions at work. NH works provide the IL program with their "Creative Job Search" workbook developed by their staff that is a comprehensive guide to "Getting Hired & Keeping Your Job". This workbook is placed in the packet youth in care receive at the start of the adult living preparation process.

2. Adult Living Preparation Planning Process

The IL workers initiate the adult living preparation planning process with youth by giving them a packet of information that contains a manual called "Adult Living Preparation Process" and a workbook called "Creative Job Search." The ALP process is a continuum of activities based on the materials in the IL Packets and the needs of the youth. The IL staff adjusts each packet according to the specific needs of each the youth. Once the three assessments are completed with the youth, and the ALP plan is developed, additional material is added to the packet and noted in the "Needs/Action Plan of the ALP Plan. The IL staff focus mainly to get youth on

track educationally and emotionally and into a career track that relates to their natural abilities.

The IL staff also make sure youth have an updated immunization form, an official birth certificate, current medical and school records, a social security card and the phone numbers of their CPSW or JPPO and IL worker and also of “NH Help Line”.

MATERIAL in the IL PROGRAM INFORMATIONAL PACKET

Brochures, Booklets, & Community-Based Resources & A HOTLINE 1-800-852-3388	“Making It On Your Own” Workbook
“Helpline” Phone Numbers	Staff Phone Numbers
Application for Birth Certificate	Social Security Card Application
Immunization Record	NH Employment Program Brochure
TEENLINE-1-800-639-6095	“Beyond High School” by NH Bar Association
Employment Security – NH Works	Adult Living Preparation Process Manual
Community Living-Directions Manual & “Understanding the NH Courts”	Adult Advocate/Mentor forms Recreational & Other Adult Supports
Youth Today’s Useful (800) Numbers	Housing Resource Information

Foster parents or group home staff completes the ALP paperwork with youth in their care and the IL staff meets with the youth at a later date. During that time the worker reviews the process and explain to the youth about the types of IL services available to them. They also review the 3 assessments and the ALP plan with them and provide guidance and counseling around their educational and employment goals.

The IL staff and CPSW/JPPO work closely with family members when a youth’s plan is to return home to help establish a realistic transitional track. The IL staff, foster parents, and staff at residential programs, treatment centers, or other specialized programs also work together to develop concrete goals for youth around transitional issues. They intensify their involvement when they

find that a youth is not able to return home. Some of the issues that surface during the aftercare planning process include a lack of adult support with:

- Serious developmental, mental health or addiction issues;
- Academic and vocational options after high school;
- Behavior management programs relating to social situations and interpersonal, interaction activities;
- Age-appropriate work programs with advocates programs;
- Medical and dental issues;
- Criminal diversion and prevention problems; and
- Driver's education or driver safety courses.

ADULT LIVING PREPARATION PLAN

1. Education & Employment;	HS-GED-Vocational/Trade School Job Prep.-On The Job Employed F or PT
2. Personal Care, Health, & Safety;	Hygiene-Medical History Medication- Emergency Medical Treatment- Pregnancy
3. Behavior Social Skills	Family & Peer Relationship-Supports Communication Skills-Adult Advocate
4. Home, Food & Money Management	Menu Planning- Budget & Savings Adult Housing Options-Shopping Skills
5. Transportation-Law-Community	Driver's License-Car Insurance-Public Transit Legal Status-Extended Custody
6. Future Income Needs-Personal Needs- Community Living	Birth Certificate-SS Card-Ed. Information-Med. History-Med. Needs- RX-Insurance

The Adult Living Plan developed with youth when they reach age 16 includes an Aftercare Plans that is completed at age 17 or six months prior to leaving foster care. The long-term goals are to reconnect youth with their families and

their community, help them become employable, introduces them to adult educational and career options and adult education programs. The aftercare process also includes identifying family supports, affordable housing options, community support programs, and learning how access community services. The IL staff work directly with the youth around budget issues, earning capacity and locating a safe life style within their community that allows them to grow and reach their goals.

3. Independent Living Program Services

The IL staff review the ALP plan and identifies what the youth needs to help them progress through the transition. After the IL services are identified and recorded in the Needs/ Action Plan section of the ALP plan the foster parents and group home staff monitor and record any changes that may have occurred. The “PAYA” IL Skills training curriculum and the “Making It On Your Own” workbook are used as the tools to teach youth daily living skills. The IL staff have also partnered with the UNH Extension Services to have them train youth in the seacoast region on their IL Skills using their training curriculum. The following purchased IL services are available for youth in placement and for youth who have left foster care and are making the transition to adulthood.

Independent Living Program Purchased Services

IL Skills Training	Transportation for IL
Adventure-Based Training	Mentor Matching
IL Aftercare Assessment	Stipend
Miscellaneous Expenses	Aftercare Tracer

The IL staff work within each district office community to become familiar with the local resources are in relationship to youth on their caseload. Each area has different services and support available but it can be difficult trying to find what the eligibility criteria is for each service. The “Help-Line” (1-800-852-3388) is good resource to find special help in an emergency. Special programs or resources that

are listed in the local phonebook but lack the specifics of each service. The IL staff make a list of resource in a “Pocket Guide To Independent Living” published by **Independent Living Resources, Inc., Durham, North Carolina.** There is a section for addresses and phone numbers in the back of the pocket guide.

Independent Living Program Indirect and Direct Services

DIRECT	INDIRECT
IL Informational Packets	Community Resource Guide
Needs Assessment & IL Life Skills Assessment	Adult Housing Options
Career Assessments Aptitude-Interest Inventory	Educational & Employment Training
Adult Living Preparation Plans	Career Plans
Aftercare Plans	Career & Vocational Connections
Adult Advocates and Mentors	Job Training Planning
Follow-Up Supports	Adult Advocates

Independent Living Program I L Aftercare Purchased Services

Aftercare Housing	Aftercare Mentor Matching
Aftercare Transportation	Aftercare Stipend
IL Aftercare Assessment	Aftercare Miscellaneous s

The IL services that are offered statewide does not involve the county or other political subdivision in the State relating to distributing or matching the federal money. The IL staff enrolls each provider for specific service and when its' for an aftercare service, the youth is enrolled as the provider. When a youth needs after care housing the IL worker agrees to pay half the half the rent to the landlord as long as the youth matches the other half and can verify having a job. The worker also reviews the youth's budget to see how much is earned and if is it enough to pay for the rent.

B. Services for Emotionally and Physically Challenged Teens

Youth with mental health issues challenge the IL staff the greatest, because this population often requires extensive specialized services for longer periods of time. Young adults between the ages 17-21 who are emotionally/physically challenged often need intensive

community supports but had to struggle to survive on their own when they are found not eligible for adult services. Local adult services, mental health agencies, and public/private child welfare agencies have many programs to help this population. The IL program staff work closely with the agencies in their regions to make the program staff aware of the needs of youth leaving the foster care system. The goal of this aftercare intervention is connect them to resources so they reach can reach their educational and career goals, be successfully employed, and become active, productive members of their community.

1. Community Support Systems

An “Aging-Out Coalition“ was formed in Manchester, NH to help youth and young adults who face emotional challenges and are at risk of becoming homeless. Project Renew’s is a nationally recognized transition model for youth with serious emotional and behavioral disabilities, developed in Manchester and now operates under a non-profit umbrella organization, the Alliance for Community Supports. Their programs are supported by the Manchester Institute on Disabilities that supports youth in achieving success in their personal lives and in their careers. The members of the coalition accepted an invitation to partner with a Teen Art Drop In Center that facilitated by “Project Renew”. The coalition funds a Resource Coordinator position for the center so young people who come to the center may need help.

The IL staff refers former foster care youth to local community mental health agencies as there are programs to help them. These agencies often have mentors or adult advocates in the community to help young adults Youth with serious challenges and who can not live alone often use an adult in the community to provide them with a shared living arrangement. Mentors and adult advocates are helpful in bridging the gap for all youth making the transition to adulthood.

The IL program works directly with “The Alliance for Community Support’s Project Renew” in of Manchester, NH to help youth who are preparing to leave foster care to find a job, work on their career path, and develop a Personal Future Plan that addressed transitional issues. They work “NH Works,” and “Workforce

Opportunities,. Ins. to help youth become employed and succeed in the workforce. The ongoing case management provides youth with an employment advocate to help them on the job site and is there after work to help with time management, budgeting, home management, transportation options, shopping, and affordable housing options. As the youth adjusts to the transition into the work world, the employment mentor shifts to an advocate role helps the youth locate medical and dental services, educational or vocational programs and joins them in recreational and leisure time activities.

2. Employment and Career Planning Services

Both “School-to-Career” and School-to-Work programs help youth make educational and vocational plans in relationship to their academic career direction. The IL staff uses “Careerware ” software to get a Career Aptitude and Interest Inventory profile on youth. The categories listed in the aptitude profile on career and work opportunities motivate youth to develop employment skills or connect to specific jobs through educational programs or work experiences. It was found that youth with a vested interest in their future career plans and educational goals responded more positively to future planning. Job training programs and employment opportunities became part of the youth’s future plans for college or other secondary educational programs. Many former foster care youth secondary education programs were unable to maintain an acceptable grade and did not know how to handle the social freedoms. They need to have an adult friend, such as a student mentor, to help them until they are able to establish a peer group.

C. Data Collection for the Independent Living Program

The IL program policy mandates that an ALP Plan be completed with youth within 30 days of placement if they are age 16 or were placed after age 16 and have not reached their 21st birthday. IL staff received a monthly report from NH BRIDGES that is used to identify all youth who are eligible for IL services. The report lists the name of the current provider, petition type of the youth, date of birth, age, and codes relating to special education and disabilities. The NH IL Coordinator reviews the report monthly

with the IL Staff to monitor compliance and make corrections when necessary. The data elements collected presently are as illustrated in the chart below.

INDEPENDENT LIVING STATISTICS

MONTHLY REPORT

Age	Ethnicity	IV-Eligible	Disabl.Code	Coded Special Ed.
Grade Level	School Program	Eligible date	Placement Type	IL Packet
Needs Assessment	Skills Assessment	ALP Plan	Date	Career Survey
Social Security Card	Birth Certificate	Job Status	FT-PT	Aftercare Plan
Exit Date	Parental Status	Placement History	# of PLS.	Post Care Housing
Medical Insurance	Secondary Ed.	Tech. Col.	Job Tr.	Job Corps
Age at Exit Date	6 month Follow-up	Job	School	Housing

The IL staff record the IL work completed with youth on their caseload every month. This information is entered into the Independent Living database in Bridges. Included are the dates the three assessments, the ALP Plan, and Aftercare Plan were completed and the scores of the IL Skills Assessments. The IL staff also updates the information for the monthly **Independent Living Statistics** report when changes occur. The mandated outcome measures for the Independent Living programs being developed nationally will also be recorded on Bridges when the database has been established.

D. Youth Eligible for Educational Services

The educational deficits are made known to the IL staff, residential provider, or foster parents early in the transitional living process. The IL staff sends a letter to the local schools requesting an opportunity to join with them to assist with the transitional planning on youth identified as educationally disabled pursuant to

RSA 186-C:2,1. The letter states that the IL staff has completed a transitional living plan with the youth and is available to assist them with the development of a Transition Plan (PL 94-142, a federal education law). They also offer to be available to assist them with the “Individualized Education Plan” (IEP) on all special education students in out of home placement. This collaborative effort of working with school staff adds support and helps youth stay on track and increases the chance of the youth reaching their full potential as adults. The school personnel have expressed their appreciation for the joint effort of the IL staff in the planning process.

E. Permanency Planning for Youth in IL Program

The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 and Promoting Safe and Stable Families and Permanency mandates are challenging to meet when an youth reaches age 16. The importance of family involvement in the planning process is essential, because youth making the transition to adulthood need someone to keep them safe and provide a sense of permanency especially when they become adults. The IL staff works closely with the CPSW around adoption and reunification issues and with community agencies statewide to enhance the support from local resources for youth aging out of the foster care system.

During the aftercare preparation period, the permanency options are examined in relationship to the youth’s family situation and how their family could assist. When the family situation is not supportive or feasible for the youth to return home, the IL worker examines the types of community residential options available, such as: Job Corps, shared housing options, transitional living arrangements through Child and Family Services of NH transitional living programs or apartments, and local boarding homes.

DCYF staff, community advocates, and family members work together to strengthen the transitional living process for youth in foster care. The role of the family is essential in the process and their willingness to provide a home must be

evaluated early in the adult living preparation process. The Aftercare Plan is the last phase of the transitional process so the family issues are addressed from the beginning because it is the basis of planning for the youth's future. After the youth has made the transition to adulthood either by returning to the family or going out on their own, the IL staff provides support and outreach for all former foster care youth age 21 and younger.

F. Health and Wellness Education

The IL staff work closely with the DCYF Foster Care Health Program that provides health care for children in out-of-home placements to ensure that all the youth's health needs are met prior to leaving the custody of DCYF. The health care plan is included in section 6 of the ALP plan along with medical history, health insurance options, and prescribed medication. The IL staff review the youth's immunization forms with the nurse and coordinate medical and physical exams and dental checks prior to the youth leaving foster care.

The IL staff also provides youth with a list of community health resources as they make the transition to adulthood that includes a "Pocket Guide To Independent Living" published by *Independent Living Resources, Inc.*

❖ Mental Health Services	❖ Educational & Tutoring programs
❖ Medical & Dental Health Services	❖ Family Life & Sexuality Education Programs
❖ Enhancement programs	❖ Career Guidance & Work programs
❖ Recreational & Sport programs	❖ Trade School & College advocates

1. Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention

The IL State Coordinator works with the Department of Education's Health Educators to assist with identifying programs to meet the needs of youth around pregnancy prevention issues and sexually transmitted diseases. The Coordinator has also been involved with programs developed by the department of education

around the issue of young fathers and their financial obligation to their child's support. "Health Forums" were held in several high schools' health classes throughout NH to increase awareness of the financial responsibilities of youth who have a child or who are at risk of producing a child and how this could effect their career plans and medical health. The forums seem to clear up many myths that students had about fathering a child or having a child.

The Health Educators, Teen Clinic nurses, and the IL staff have joined together at the "Aging Out" Coalition of Manchester, NH to address prevention efforts as related to issues of teen pregnancy.

There are limited numbers of residential programs in NH that serve pregnant and parenting mothers and their children ages 16-20. The Norwell House in Nashua was a placement resource for young mothers who were formerly having to go to homeless shelters to get services because many of the residential places for pregnant and parenting mothers are full and have waiting lists. The IL staff work closely with each facility around the issue of including pregnancy prevention material in the skills trainings. They are also encouraged to interject the cost of bringing a child into the world in the budget section of the skills training. Many providers ask staff from the Child Support Enforcement unit to speak to youth in placement. Youth learn what their responsibilities are of fathering a child and the fact that they would be ordered to pay for the child's care or be put in prison.

2. Drug and Alcohol Prevention Programs

The New Hampshire National Guard works closely with local Law Enforcement Agencies around the prevention issues and illegal drugs and alcohol use. Youth in foster care often come from unhealthy environments involving alcohol and drug abuse exposure. The New Hampshire National Guard offers a "Counter Drugs" training program that helps empower youth to meet challenges of not becoming involved with drugs or alcohol by teaching them how to say "No" without being considered a "Nerd". The training also teaches parents how to guide their children

through the adolescent years. They learn what to look for regarding drug or alcohol use and how to help the young person by teaching them to avoid getting involved with drug or alcohol use.

G. Teen Advisory Board

The New Hampshire Teen Advisory Board (TAB) was formed in 1997 and the youth members come from all over New Hampshire to participate. The members have a chance to step into a leadership role and have been very instrumental in making several changes regarding placement issues, driver's education, aftercare housing, secondary education scholarships and owning a car while in foster care. The members enjoy the new sense of control that comes with being a board member and they enjoy being treated with so much respect. Several TAB members have participated on youth panels held at New Hampshire DCYF conferences and adults in attendance at that workshop were very impressed by the comments of the panel members.

The Advisory Board meets monthly and works on specific projects or issues that are relevant to their region. They come together annually to share ideas and present their areas of progress with other members. TAB members put on an Annual Teen Conference each year that provides workshops that address their concerns and specific conflicts faced by children who are placed in foster homes or in residential facilities. This year's Teen 2001 Conference was held at the Child & Family Services' Camp Spaulding in Concord, NH. Youth came from all over NH to participate in the workshops and ropes course.

H. Aftercare IL Case Management for Former DCYF Youth

1. Aftercare Transition Process

When youth reach age 17 or are within 6- 12 months of leaving care, the IL staff completes an Aftercare Plan with the youth using the results of the IL Skills Assessment gathered over the last 2 years. Youth in legal guardianship with DCYF are the first priority for the IL program staff. The staff work to establish solid living arrangements and an employment situation that provides a living wage. The plan focuses on housing issues verses homelessness, living wages verses income,

budgeting verses purchasing power, job verses apprenticeship, and health care verses at risk issues. The “IL Transition Fact Sheet” reflects the youth’s status as does the program’s “Post-Placement Survey” that is completed at the end of process.

The IL worker follows up closely with the youth during the first six months of being in adulthood. They review their initial plans, check how the youth believes they are progressing, and checks if any additional services are needed. The workers touch base with the youth regularly to make sure they have a safe place to live, job and earns enough to meet their financial needs. The worker arranges to meet with youth who have called to say that the transition is not going well. The worker will to offer support and guidance and suggest arranging for an adult in the community to help them.

2. Aftercare Housing Options

a. Room Rental

The IL program staff supports the “Rent a Room” concept for youth leaving foster care or a group home placement. Clusters of “Rooms to Rent” for former DCYF youth uses an Aftercare Rental Contract that is considered a legal agreement and becomes effective after all parties have agreed and signed it. Local landlords are generally hesitant to rent an apartment to a young person under the age of 21 due to past problems. Renting rooms in private homes or with former foster care providers will be the first choice. In addition, the staff look in the community for large homes with the potential of having several rooms that could be used to replicate the “boarding” house model. All rental options selected require proprietors to meet specific safety standards as identified by the local Fire Chief.

b. IL Boarding Home

New Hampshire has one independent living home available for youth age 16 or older called the “Blue Heron”. This placement option offers a less restrictive environment where youth learn their adult living skills in a residential and

experiential setting. It offers youth who lack parental aftercare a chance to learn how to manage their schedules and find employment to support their lifestyle. The IL program will propose to group home providers about expanding their program to allow residents to stay at the facility after the case has been closed with DCYF. An area at the facility, separate from the main living area and would allow youth to live independently but still be close enough to have the support of the staff. The area would contain be a kitchen, a small bedroom and bathroom, living room, and a separate entrance.

c. Beacon Partnership

The Aging Out Coalition chaired by the director of the Child and Family Services' Transitional Program and the director of "Project Renew" plan to develop and expand their programs to help youth ages 18 –20 who have left DCYF but are not ready to be completely on their own. This housing option is a community-based, youth driven, outcome-focused housing model designed to offer in-house educational and employment services to young adults, ages 17 to 24. Residents develop their own "Life Plan" and learn important behavioral skills to be able to negotiate reaching their educational and career goals and employment goals to succeed in the work place and in the community. The program's main focus is to assist residents in reaching specific career goals while living in a safe, nurturing environment. NH Child & Family Services' Transitional Living Program and Project Renew will employ older adults to manage the living quarters. An adult lives at the house and functions in the role of a Residential Assistant (RA) used in college dorms to maintain safety and order. The RA's were trained on how to help residents find programs to help complete their high educations, find jobs with a future that provide a living wage, obtain medical and mental health services, access substance abuse treatment programs, when necessary, and get on a career track by enrolling in local colleges or university, technical programs or apprenticeship trainings.

End of the year report on project

Beacon Apartment Summary

There were 9 young women who have started the application process for the Beacon Apartment since its opening in September of 2001. Their activities are as follows:

Of the 9 applicants- 3 moved into the apartment.

- One young lady continues to live in the apartment and works full time and continues to set goals and work towards being independent.
- Two young ladies made decisions to leave the program because they did not want to get a job, broke apartment rules, and exhibited mental health issues that put other residents at risk.
- Of the 2 young women who left the program one is still receiving the projects' case-management services on a continuous basis. Though not able to live in the Beacon Apartment, all the young women were able to connect with resources in the community to further gain assistance and also were able to gain life skills in and out of the apartment.
- Of the 9, 2 showed interest in the apartment, started the application process, but chose not to follow through.
- Of the 9, 1 referral was not eligible due to aging out of DCYF placement services in Florida.
- Of the 9, 1 showed no desire or motivation to become independent.
- Of the 9, 1 started the application, but decided to move back in with her family. This seemed to be the best option for her because her family lived a good distance from the Beacon Apartment, and it was very important for her to be close to them. She also had two back-up plans in case moving in with her mother ended up not working out.
- Of the 9, one young woman is currently in the application process. She currently resides in a group home. She was referred before moving out and in conjunction with the group home, and through learned experiences, we are working to make the transition into the apartment more comfortable and smooth. She continues to work on improving communication, learning local transportation options, maintaining employment, and budgeting.

Barriers

Overall there was a mixture of barriers that we saw as the young women applied and/or moved into the apartment. In summary they were:

- Going from a complete structure to almost complete independence/responsibility.
- Lack of concept of reality/responsibility.
- Mental Health Behaviors that cannot be maintained in the apartment safely.

The case managers concluded that youth from group homes needed more guidance and structured stepping-stones because they were used to following rules.

The first year of the project has answered many questions about what youth need as far as support, guidance and structure. The program plans to make the appropriate adjustment to the case management in the apartment.

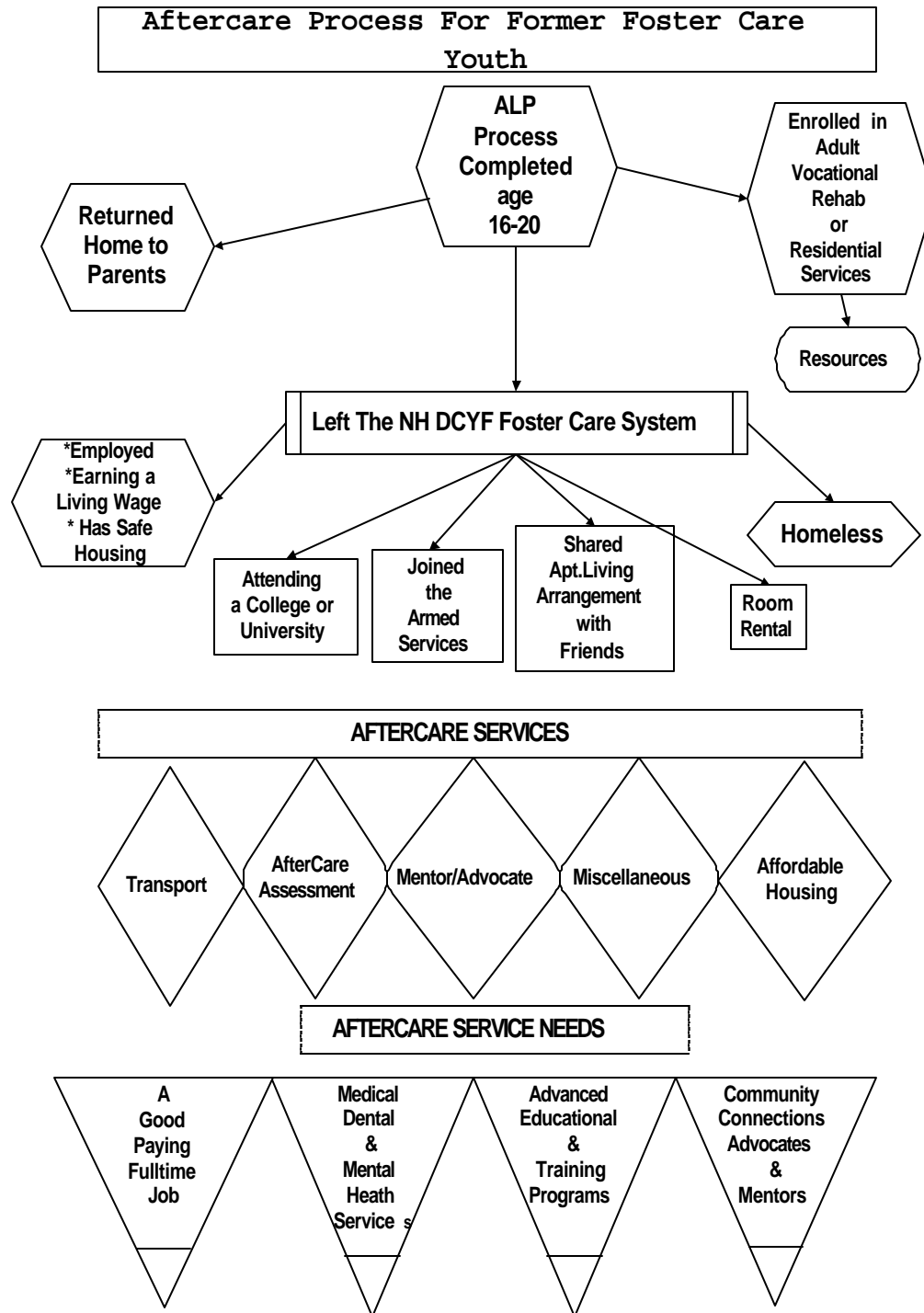
I. Expansion of the IL Program to include Aftercare Services

1. IL Aftercare Services

Aftercare Services that were integrated into the adult living preparation process include workshops on budgeting, frugal spending, and purchasing power. Residential staff and foster parents were asked to address the serious concerns with youth relative to their particular situation. These issues were often addressed at the beginning of the aftercare process and at administrative reviews or court hearings. The IL program services have been expanded to include IL Aftercare Services for youth who left custody after their 18th birthday.

Independent Living Aftercare Services
Aftercare Housing
Transportation
Employment Advocate Matching
Stipend
Miscellaneous

The month before the youth plans to leave DCYF custody, he or she is enrolled as an IL aftercare service provider under one or all of the aftercare services. Financial assistance provided to each youth is on an individual basis as the need or situation arises. Each situation will be assessed to ensure that the youth will benefit from the intervention and not be just maintained in a crisis situation. The Aftercare Plan, the IL Skills Assessment, and the ILP Transition Fact Sheet help formulate what their strengths and needs are and where financial supports could be best used to help long term.



2. IL Program Tracking Process

The transitional fact sheet was developed to help review where youth stood in all they had worked on during the adult living preparation process. By knowing what they have achieved is an important part of the whole process. It also helps youth

with their aftercare plans and identifying what aftercare services they might need. One of the most important factors that has been noticed by the IL staff is that it is essential to take the time at the beginning of the transitional process to clarify what the youth needs to accomplish before they start to get ready to move on into adulthood. When youth are not ready or able to handle the responsibilities of adulthood, they become confused and scared. By developing specific skills like daily living skills that are identified by the IL Skills Assessment, helps them. The ILP Transitional Fact Sheet is the final report for the youth and the IL program's efforts. It will be used to track specific outcome measures for six areas.

ILP Transition Fact Sheet

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>
<u>Transition Date</u>	<u>Age At Transition</u>
<u>Transition Reason</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reunification • Court Closed • Age of Majority • Completed HS/GED 	<u>Living Arrangement</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With Bio Parent • Former F.Parent or GH • Campus • Roommate with friends • Military • Room APT. House
<u>IL & AC Services</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Education or Voc. Ed. • Money Management • Drug/Alcohol Counseling • Mental Health Svcs • Life Skills • College – Voc Program • Tutoring • Driver's Education State/Fed./ Local Resources	<u>Employment</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working- FT or PT • Employer & Address • NH Works One Stop Center • On The Job Training • Apprenticeship Program • SSI Disability • Savings • Family or spouse • Inheritance • Employment Advocate/Mentor
<u>Education</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High School • GED • Post Secondary Program • Apprenticeship 	<u>Community Resources</u> Ed. & Voc. Resumes Med History Immunization SS Card Birth Certificate Advocate/Mentor Transition Plan

To capture additional outcome measures being forwarded to the IL State Coordinator by the ACF federal specialists monitoring the IL programs, this form will be revised to include the new requirements. In addition, an aftercare survey will be developed and incentives for respondents who maintain contact with the IL staff and complete the survey annually to age 21.

3. Transportation Services in Aftercare

Aftercare Services include transportation for youth in early adulthood. The specifications and performance guidelines for this service will be outlined in a contract written jointly by the youth and the IL staff. For example, youth who are going to college may need help getting to college and returning home on holidays and vacations. Youth may need help getting a ride “home” if they decide to move back with their families after having located their parents and feel it’s a safe choice “go home”. The IL program would be able to help them with the request but will require a safety component, such as a return ticket and pre-paid phone card if the arrangements do not last.

4. Miscellaneous Services

The miscellaneous service is used to help youth obtain a variety of items that they may need in making the adjustment to adulthood. The service could include work clothes, uniforms, tools, books, car insurance costs, deposits, or whatever else would help the youth remain on track.

J. Additional IL & Aftercare Activities

1. College for Life Long Learning

The staff from the IL Program and College of Life Long Learning have worked together to develop a training to help providers and staff address teens’ behaviors. By linking educational experiences with career plans and life aspirations, youth are able to change their focus away from risky behaviors. It was discovered that when teens believe they can get a specific job or get into a program or school they want, they are then able to make a commitment to reaching their goal. The IL staff helps them understand why at-risk behaviors or criminal records will interfere with their

plans for the future. Parents were also taught how to motivate their teen into applying themselves. The trainings taught them that most teens need structure and guidance even though the teen fights the restrictions. Many parents were found to be unsure about what they should say to their teen and feared that if they were too strict, they would alienate their teen. They learned that works just the opposite and the more structure in the house, the happier the teen.

2. Outreach & Peer Support Groups

An outreach group will be established using the model established by Child & Family Services Transitional Living Housing project and Project Renew's "Hot Couch" drop-in center. The model of "Youth Assisting Youth" model is designed to have older youth, in their 20's, work with youth who are making the transition into adulthood. It has been an effective model for youth in the IL program as younger teens look up to their older peers and respond well to their support and guidance. Outreach workers in the community will be asked to work together on identifying tasks and important issues of being a peer support or outreach worker. It is important that issues affecting youth today around safety, empowerment, being respected, and forming community partnership are addressed with everyone involved. Peer support groups can educate teens on how to build workable alternatives to risky behaviors through mediation techniques. Members will be trained in how to address critical issues such as: abstinence versus sexual activities, violent or bullying conduct versus cooperative behaviors, and safe practices or healthy choices versus negative interactions.

Peer support group members and outreach workers will be trained in how to address the teen drug abuse, unsafe sexual activities or unwanted teenage pregnancy, suicides among teens, and delinquent or criminal behaviors. Youth ages 18-21 will be asked to form area support groups and empower families as partners and colleagues to help make the changes.

3. College Tuition Waiver Law for Youth Formerly in Foster Care

The New Hampshire Technical Colleges now allows former foster care youth to attend at minimal costs after financial aid and Pell grants have been applied for by the youth. They also receive ongoing support and tutoring on any subject by an upper classmate.

IL staff work with providers to make sure that every youth who wants to go to college will have the financial support to attend.

4. Medicaid Benefits for Youth Formerly in Foster Care

The provision regarding Medicaid benefits for former foster care youth ages 18-21 has been drafted and hopefully will change to give them benefits up to age 21. Youth who leave DCYF custody are entitled to “Healthy Kid” benefits through their 19th year. There are considerations being proposed, such as drafting legislation on this issue, so NH youth age 19 –21 can receive state and federally funded health benefits. The Teen Advisory Board members are willing to meet with legislators to discuss how important it is for them to have medical coverage up until they reach the age of 21.

5. IL Services for Youth from Indian Tribes

No recognized Indian tribes in New Hampshire although there is a Tribal Counsel whose membership is minimal. They were not able to identify any youth age 16 or older who were involved with DCYF. The IL State Coordinator has offered to assist New Hampshire with locating any youth from their three tribes that may have re-located in New Hampshire. The Tribal Council members will contact the NH IL State Coordinator if they find that a youth from Maine whose family has moved or has been placed in New Hampshire. The Tribal Council members will assist with the IL casework with any specific case management issues that occur during adult living preparation process and planning. This coordination will also continue when the Maine youth in the placement starts with the aftercare process and planning for the transition to adulthood.

K. Statistics on the NH Independent Living Program during 1999-2000

NH IL-Chafee Foster Care Independence Program

	FFY99	FFY00
1. Number of children/youth <u>eligible</u> to receive services provided under the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program during the year.	715	829
2. Number of eligible children/youth who <u>received</u> services under the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program.	489	679

	Children under age 18 305	Children ages 18 –21 who left care because they turned 18 80
HS Diploma/GED	X	X
Career Exploration	X	X
Vocational Training	X	X
Job Placement -Workforce Opportunities Unlimited Inc	X	X
Job Retention	X	X
Daily Living Skills	X	X
Financial Management/Planning	X	X

1999-2000 STATS of the Independent Living Program

1. Total number of youth served by IP program: 679 youth
2. The Division has 13 types of placement options for youth involved with the DCYF-ILP. These are as follows:

Educational Facility	Independent Living Home
Experiential Wilderness Facilities	In-Patient Psychiatric Facility
Group Home	Intermediate Group Home
Foster Home	Relative Home
Residential Treatment Facility	Shelter Care Facility
Therapeutic Foster Home	Long Term Foster Care

3. Placement type of youth served by the I.L. program were:

TYPE OF PLACEMENT	#OF YOUTH SERVED
➤ Youth Development Center	30
➤ YSC-Tobey School	12
➤ Group Home or IL Home	302
➤ Residential Treatment Centers	51
➤ Relative Homes	38
➤ Foster Home	220
➤ Long Term Foster Care	14
➤ Independent Living Home	<u>12</u>
Total number of youth	679 youth

4. Youth served by I.L. Program during 1999-2000 by petition type were:

"CHINS" or Delinquent	54%	367 youth
Abuse/Neglect	46%	312 youth

5. There were 193 youth in the IL Program who were classified as SMI or Seriously Mentally Ill or Developmentally Delayed.
6. The IL staff was able to serve 679 youth in each the age groups listed below:
- The average number of placements for youth who were served by the program was 2.5 placements.
 - The average number of months that youth were served by the I.L. program was approximately 21 months.

Summary of IL Youth and Services for FY 10/1/1999 to 9/30/2000

Total Eligible Youth	829		
Ethnicity			
Caucasian	687		
Black	27		
Hispanic	9		
Native American/Alaskan	5		
Mixed	6		
Not specified	95		
Number of educationally identified youth	443		
IL Services			
IL Packets	310		
Adult Living Preparation Plans	260		
Aftercare PLans	109		
Discharges			
Total Discharged during the year	415		
Number discharged within 3 months of eligibility	55		
Number discharged between age 16.25 and 17	152		
Number of 17 year olds discharged	98		
Number of 18 year olds discharged	80		
Number of 19 year olds discharged	16		
Number of 20 year olds discharged	14		
Postcare housing for adults discharged	(Data available for only 28)		
Former foster home	4		
Homeless shelter	1		
Military	1		
Own Home	6		
Parent Home	4		
Relative Home	2		
Post Secondary	5		
Unknown	1		
Other	4		
School Grade information	(Data available for only 36)	%of total	% of known
Discharged adults:			
Number who graduated:	16	15%	44%
Completed grade 11	6	5%	17%
Completed grade 10	1	1%	3%
Completed grade 9	11	10%	31%
Completed grade 8	2	2%	6%
Employment Information	(Data available for only 101)		
Part time	76		
Full time	23		
Not employed	2		

L. The Goals of the Independent Living Program for FY 2000-2001

1. To provide adult living preparation planning and services for youth in out-of-home care who are under the age of 21 to assist them with making the transition to adulthood.

SOURCE

- ❖ IL Informational Packet includes workbook and ALP Achievement Certification-
- ❖ IL Skills Scored Assessment & Needs Assessment
- ❖ IL Skills training using experiential learning
- ❖ Career assessment

2. To reunify youth with family when possible.

SOURCE

- ❖ Encourage parents to join the adult living preparation planning process of their children who are under the age of 21.

3. To help youth with their educational plans and goals by providing training and technical assistance through employment counseling and career planning.

SOURCE

- ❖ NH Works One Stop Service
- ❖ Employment mentors or advocates
- ❖ Educational supports and resources
- ❖ Financial aid guidance for college tuition

4. To provide medical benefits for youth who have left DCYF custody and have reached age 18, and who are under the age of 21.

SOURCE

- ❖ Medicaid for youth up to age 19
- ❖ Healthy Kids for youth age 19-21
- ❖ School Insurance

5. To ensure fair and equitable treatment and non-discrimination of all youth involved with the IL Program and are not discriminated against regardless of race, gender, or disability.

SOURCE

- ❖ Bureau of Indian Affairs
- ❖ Interagency involvement in the ALP planning process
- ❖ New Hampshire Human Rights Commission
- ❖ New Hampshire Bar Association

6. To maintain a connection to all former foster care youth who have made the transition to adulthood.

SOURCE

- ❖ Outreach Programs
- ❖ Community Action Agencies

Summary of Independent Living Services Fiscal Year 10/1/2000 to 9/30/2001

Total Eligible Youth	814
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Ethnicity

Caucasian	668
Black	31
Hispanic	5
Native American/Alaskan	8
Mixed	4
Not specified	98

Number of educationally identified youth	469
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IL Services

IL Packets	297
Adult Living Preparation Plans	263
AftercarePreparation Plans	85

Employment Information for youth who did not age out of placement

Part time	33
Full time	10
Unknown	425

Youth who left placement

Total	338
Within 3 months of placement	45
Between age 16.25 and 17	113
Number of 17 year olds	93
Number of 18 year olds	61
Number of 19 year olds	16
Number of 20 year olds	3
Number of 21 year olds	7

Total number of adults who left placement:	87
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% of Total % of Known

Post care housing

Own Home	19	22%	25%
Alone	9		
With Roommate or married	10		
Parent Home	18	21%	24%
By Choice	12		
No other choice	2		
Receiving Adult Services	4		
Former foster home	12	14%	16%
For summer before College	5		
With friends	10	11%	13%
Adult supportive Services	3	3%	4%
Transitional Living Program	3	3%	4%

Relative Home	3	3%	4%
Direct to post secondary education housing	2	2%	3%
Military	1	1%	1%
Job Corps	1	1%	1%
Hotel	1	1%	1%
Imprisoned	1	1%	1%
Unknown – runaway	1	1%	1%
Homeless shelter	0	0%	0%
Unknown	12	14%	

Last Grade Completed

Number who graduated:	43	49%	67%
Certificate of Attendance	7		
Number accepted to college	11		
Completed grade 11	11	13%	17%
Completed grade 10	7	8%	11%
Completed grade 9	1	1%	2%
Working on GED	2	2%	3%
Unknown	20	23%	

Employment Information

Part time	26	30%	57%
Full time	11	13%	24%
Not employed	8	9%	17%
Receiving SSI	1	1%	2%
Unknown	30	34%	

Six-Month Follow-up information

Number of youth for whom information was obtained 31 % of Known

Housing

Former Foster Home	3	10%
Campus Housing	6	19%
With Friends	8	26%
Imprisoned	1	3%
Own Home	5	16%
Alone	1	
With a Roommate	4	
With adult supervisor, on parole	1	3%
Parent Home	2	6%
Shelter	1	3%
Transitional Living Program	2	6%
Adult Supportive Services	2	6%
Number with same kind of housing after 6 months*	15	54%
Number who became more independent**	10	36%
Number who became less independent**	3	11%
Unable to determine**	3	

*Only reflects housing type, not whether the youth moved around

**Based on housing type only

Employment Information

Full Time	4	16%
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	Own Home with a Roommate	2	
	Former Foster Home	1	
	Own Home, alone	1	
Part Time		10	40%
	Living with Friends	4	
	Transitional Living Program	2	
	Adult services	1	
	Own Home, roommate	1	
	With adult supervisor, on parole	1	
Unemployed		10	40%
	Living with Friends	3	
	Adult Services	2	
	Full-time student	1	
	Imprisoned	1	
	Shelter	1	
	Former Foster Home	1	
	Parent Home	1	
Unknown		6	24%
SSI		1	4%
Number who's employment status remained the same		14	67%
Number who's employment status improved		2	10%
Number who's employment status deteriorated		5	24%
Six-month Follow-up, cont.			
Education			
	In post-secondary school	7	
	Dropped out of high school	4	
	Dropped out of college	1	
	Working on GED	1	
	Working on diploma thru correspondence school	1	
	Finished HS on own	1	
	Unknown	60	

M. Number of Youth Served by the ILP During FFY2001

There were 645 youth served by the IL Program during October 1, 2000—September 30, 2001. Residential treatment, group homes, and foster parents helped conduct the adult living preparation (ALP) planning process with youth in their care and made sure each youth received an information packet that explains the process. Youth in foster care placed with a relative also were given the material to complete the adult living preparation planning process with youth in their care.

Approximately 100-150 youth continue to not receive IL services every year. After reviewing caseload data that comes out every month from NH Bridges, it was

discovered that youth placed in a psychiatric treatment program, at the Youth Development Center, at a shelter care facility awaiting the Dispositional hearing, and youth who come into the DCYF's custody and go home within 30-60 days could explain the reason for discrepancy. The IL coordinator will meet with the staff at each facility and ask that the adult preparation process begin with all youth in residence and that a IL packet be given to them. CLL will be asked to include the staff in the "NH Trails" trainings

N. Expansions of the NH IL Program

1. Specialized Approach to Independent Living

The IL program will be changing the way the IL services are distributed statewide by using a specialized approach. Nancy Rollins, Director of DCYF has approved the NH Trails IL Skills Training Curriculum and supports the plan that UNH-Center for Life Long Learning will provide the trainings. She has also presented a plan for every residential program and foster parent who are caregivers for youth become more specialized. Each residential facility would have a Residential IL Coordinator for every 10 residents. In addition, foster parents who work with teens will be asked to become a specialized foster homes and paid a higher rate of payment. Group home staff and foster parents would be required to take the Training for Trainers on the NH Trails training curriculum and make a higher level of commitment to youth in their care. Youth would be asked to leave their care only if they were a danger to self and others. They would be asked to leave to get help and to be safe but would be allowed to return once the crisis had subsided. The providers would also become trainers to provide the NH Training for other providers in their region.

2. Decentralization of the IL staff

In addition, the Director has de-centralized the IL staff and is working on creating an adolescent unit in every District Office. This model would enhance IL service delivery and decrease fragmentation of the adult living preparation process. The goal of the IL program is to give every youth in care the chance to be all they can be.

3. Expansion of the Teen Advisory Role

The members of the Teen Advisory Board in each area of the 4 regions will be asked to select a special issue to address that they believe needs changes. For example: the Concord area group could work on legislative issues and learn how to make changes in NH laws. In another area, the members could take on recruiting outreach workers to help youth who end up homeless or without supports. Youth on the Teen Advisory Board members have excellent skills to identify the needs of teens as they themselves are in the process of making the transition to adulthood. In addition, it is suggested that approximately 20 former foster care youth be on the board to help with identifying the needed changes. One suggestion being considered is to have the teen board members become involved with developing an Outreach Peer Support group for NH during FFY 2002. Members of the Teen Advisory Board and other new members could work closely with the teens at the “Hot Couch” drop in center and the NH Foster Parent Association to address this initiative. Youth in foster care are extremely resilient and are able to be advisors to youth who are making the transition to adulthood and need support and guidance.

O. Barriers of Adult Living Preparation Planning and Aftercare Services

1. Educational Challenges and Gaps

Youth in foster care often have educational delays caused by poor attendance, poor performance, low academic levels and/or special needs. These educational delays are often the result of disruptive family histories and the neglect or abuse that took place prior to their coming into care.

P. Expected Results and Outcomes

1. Resource Directory

IL Program staff play an active, supportive role with caregivers who help youth who are making the transition to adulthood. Many foster parents and biological parents need supportive alternatives to help youth grow and develop into a self supporting adult. A Resource Directory developed by the Teen Advisory Board lists local self-help groups, emergency telephone numbers, crisis "Helpline" numbers, and people to contact when situations become overwhelming.